

The Rocky Hill Town Council held a special meeting on Monday, November 24, 2014 in the Council Chambers of Town Hall. Mayor Henry Vasel called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Those in attendance: Deputy Mayor Nadine Bell, Councilor Meg Casasanta, Councilor Guy Drapeau, Councilor Joe Kochanek, Councilor Bill MacDonald, Councilor Tim Moriarty, Councilor Frank Szeps and Councilor Cathy Vargas. Also present: Town Manager Guy Scaife.

Those absent: Finance Director John Mehr.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

New Business

A. Discussion/Approval – Resolution to Develop Charge & Recommendation to Charter Revision Commission

Mayor Vasel asked Jo-Anne Booth to read this Resolution aloud and in full.

Councilor Drapeau made a motion to approve the following Resolution. The motion was seconded by Deputy Mayor Bell and adopted. Yays (6): Vasel, Bell, Casasanta, Drapeau, Szeps and Vargas. Nays (3): Kochanek, MacDonald and Moriarty.

**“Resolution Authorizing the Formation Of A Charter Revision Commission”**

WHEREAS, at its meeting of October 20, 2014, the Council discussed the formation of a Charter Revision Commission; and

WHEREAS, the members of the Council present at said meeting expressed a clear preference on the record in public to establish a seven member commission; and

WHEREAS, a motion was made to establish a Charter Revision Commission consisting of seven members but was never voted upon; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council at its meeting of November 17, 2014, voted upon all of the names presented to it, by either political party or the public at large, for consideration for appointment to the Charter Revision Commission; and

WHEREAS, the following individuals were approved by a majority vote of the Council to serve on the Charter Revision Commission;

Phil Benoit  
Kevin Clements  
Neil Geldof  
Rocco Sanzo

Frank Simboski  
James Tallberg  
Jeff Thomen

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: That a Charter Revision Commission comprised of seven members is hereby established to serve pursuant to the Connecticut General Statutes, the Rocky Hill Town Charter and at the Direction or Charge of the Town Council, as determined by further resolution of the Council.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That the action of the Town Council in appointing the aforesaid individuals to the Charter Revision Commission is ratified and said individuals are hereby appointed to the Charter Revision Commission.

Adopted in accordance with law this 24<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2014.

Before this motion was voted on, Councilor MacDonald said he wouldn't be supporting this. Through Town Manager Scaife and Town Attorney Borea, Councilor MacDonald had asked for two Resolutions. One would be to initiate and charge the Charter Revision Commission. He believes that it is pretty much unanimous with regards to the Town Charter needing to be revised and he is all in favor of that but it bothers him that the appointments from the Democratic Committee had been thrown aside at the Town Council's last meeting. It is not a good form of government for the Republicans to pick which Democrats would participate on this Commission.

Councilor Moriarty agrees 100% with Councilor MacDonald and he wouldn't be supporting this. Councilor Moriarty doesn't believe in this new way of doing things because in the past, the Minority Party and Majority Party would have come up with recommendations and the Town Council would approve them. The revising of the Town Charter is a major step in Rocky Hill's future. He asked if the Charter Review Commission is going to be given suggestions or if they are just going to sit down in a room and start having a conversation about this. The whole process from their first discussion about this has been wrong.

Councilor Kochanek said he wouldn't be voting for this because he thinks it had been a little slanted as to how they got the candidates. The Democrats had only gotten one of their appointments voted in and he thinks that was a little bit out of order. He would have been fine if two of their appointments had gotten voted in.

At this point, the motion was voted on.

**B. Discussion & Action – Field Use Policy**

Mayor Vasel said Lisa Zerio (Director of Parks and Recreation & Custodial Staff) couldn't be present this evening but Town Manager Scaife had told him that he could answer some questions. Mayor Vasel referred the Councilors to this Policy that they all had and the highlighted sections that had the changes. He asked the Councilors if they had any questions.

Councilor MacDonald said he is fine with this and he also had spoken to Superintendent Dr. Zito to make sure he is because there is some overlap with the Board of Education side. Councilor MacDonald would like to see where this money will actually be going though and he asked Town Manager Scaife if he could present, just for informational purposes, what the accounting policies are for those reflecting the changes to the fields. Councilor MacDonald thinks everyone on the Town Council should have this at some point. His fear is that if this isn't on the record then these monies from the charging for the fields will get washed into the general account instead of going into accounts only to be used for maintaining the fields. Town Manager Scaife said he will get that. Councilor Drapeau said this could go through the Finance Committee as well. Councilor Moriarty thinks any monies they collect should go into an account for those to go back into the fields. Mayor Vasel thinks this is what they are getting at. Town Manager Scaife said the cover letter from Lisa Zerio states that the money will be deposited by Parks and Recreation in a separate Pool/Field Account for future maintenance of these areas but he told the Town Council that they could get more specificity for this if they would like. Councilor Moriarty said they have to make sure that this is for maintenance and not upgrades.

Councilor Moriarty asked if there is any provision in this policy for fundraising or for a hardship case. Mayor Vasel said Lisa Zerio is going to be the one making the final decision on that.

Councilor Vargas said monies had been sitting in the Parks and Recreation Special Rec Account for a long time and they had just cleaned this up by moving \$300,000 so she is concerned about having another account set up to Parks and Recreation. She doesn't understand why these funds can't be put in as a revenue item for the Town. Lisa Zerio can then come forward with a list of what needs to be done to the fields when it is budget time. Town Manager Scaife said that is fine. Mayor Vasel likes having a separate account so that they will be able to see how much money is in it at the end of the year. They can then know if the fees will have to be adjusted in the future if the fields end up needing a lot more maintenance compared to the money that is in this account. Councilor Vargas said there would be a separate revenue item on the Town side that has fees for field usage.

Councilor Szeps said he would be supporting this proposed document so that they can have a policy going forward but he also wants to see the Finance Committee revisiting the fees because he thinks \$25 per hour is "one heck of a bargain" for a multi-million dollar facility, including McVicar Field and the pool. He mentioned the wear and tear, as well as potential damage, that happen at the events. He would like them to revisit this in the future to get a more realistic number so that people can be charged appropriately. Councilor Moriarty said Councilor Szeps makes a good point and the Town Staff is there when some of the fields are used. Councilor Moriarty thinks that Glastonbury charges \$75 per hour just for a grass field with no lights, etc. They can look at this as generating revenue or as slowing the use of the field down. If there are a number of people from Rocky Hill using the fields, they don't want to have this where an activity will stop. People are coming to Rocky Hill because their fields are cheaper to use. He thinks this is something they can start with now but this has to be an ongoing process.

Councilor Kochanek agrees with Councilor Szeps and Councilor Moriarty with regards to the \$25 per hour. Councilor Kochanek thinks the fees should be raised to something reasonable but

they shouldn't be out of line. Mayor Vassel asked what the fees should be raised to. Councilor Kochanek referred to Glastonbury charging \$75 per hour.

Councilor Moriarty made a motion to table this and check the surrounding Towns.

Councilor MacDonald said the third priority users are the businesses and it costs them \$100 per hour to use the fields which he thinks is pretty fair. McVicar Field's lights are also being charged for. He told them what they are talking about with regards to the \$25 per hour would be for the non-residents and the for profit clubs so he thinks those are the ones they would want to restrict from using the fields. He would never want to restrict the Rocky Hill Taxpayers from using them. This document is good for him now but this doesn't mean they can't revisit it annually with Parks and Recreation.

Councilor Szeps isn't trying to restrict the use of the fields. He mentioned though how they haven't even paid for the surface on McVicar Field yet but they are replacing it. He wants to get this policy out so people can use the field but they need to spend time trying to find out what a realistic number is so that they can justify other people using the field.

Councilor Moriarty made a motion to accept the Parks, Facilities and Fields Use Policy. The motion was seconded by Councilor MacDonald and adopted unanimously.

C. Presentation – MDC Representative re: Proposed Budget

Ray Sweezy, who is a MDC Commissioner from Rocky Hill, introduced John Zinzarella, who is the CFO for the MDC, and Ron Angelo, who is a Citizen Member of the Finance Committee and who was appointed by District Chairman Bill DiBella. Ray Sweezy said the five year average rate increase for Rocky Hill was 4.06% but it will be a little less than that now because their tax collections have gone down the last three years so they will be paying a smaller portion of the MDC budget. Some of the major increases in MDC's budget this year are the payroll, pension, general operations, employee benefits, maintenance, taxes and fees. MDC's Staff has been reduced from over 750 people to 536 people in the last five years. Some of these positions will have to be filled in this budget. There are over 700 retirees who they are paying. A \$2.1 billion public works project (Clean Water Project), which is the largest in the State, is being done. The interest payments and debt service is going up so he isn't expecting on seeing the budget coming down until this levels out in a few more years.

John Zinzarella gave the proposed budget presentation. (Please see the First and Second Attachment.) This had been presented at MDC's Board of Finance meeting on November 17, 2014.

Councilor Kochanek referred to the big project in Hartford with regards to the separating of the storm sewer water from regular sewer water and he asked if the reason it is being done is because it caused their plants to work extra hard where they had to sometimes dump into the Connecticut River. John Zinzarella said yes and the strategy now that was voted upon in Phase II of the referendum is the construction of a south Hartford conveyance tunnel. There is also an emphasis at the same time on controlling inflow and infiltration. They will see improvements in Rocky

Hill's plant and pipelining. The wet weather capacity will also be treated. Councilor Kochanek asked if the plants won't have to increase (i.e. add-ons, etc.) once this is finished if the population keeps increasing and if this expense will flatten out at some point in time. John Zinzarella thinks the engineers have taken capacity into account and it should flatten out. They are anticipating their construction to be completed in 2023. Councilor Kochanek asked where the water in the street will wind up after they are all done with this and if this will go straight back into the Connecticut River or if it will also be processed. John Zinzarella said they don't process storm water because that is the responsibility of the member Towns but there will probably be opportunities for partnering between the MDC and member Towns on storm water management going forward. Councilor Kochanek asked if the rainwater in Hartford that will be in the street will go into the tunnel. John Zinzarella said some of the portions of Hartford will have a separate chute for the rain water to go to the Connecticut River. The ones that are combined will still go through the MDC but they will have the three mile tunnel that can hold that. Ray Sweezy said he would be happy to bring the Engineering Staff in. He also said that the MDC has a reduced Staff but that hasn't reduced the benefits to Rocky Hill.

Councilor MacDonald said it was an excellent presentation and he thought it was very informative. The MDC had used some prior year's surplus to lessen the impact on its budget in 2014 but he isn't seeing that coming through for 2015 even though they are showing a projected surplus. He asked why they wouldn't be carrying over some surplus to help out the Town and the homeowners. John Zinzarella said in 2014, they had budgeted \$2.98 million worth of the prior fund balance but they aren't using that. They had some one time revenue. His job is to balance the Ad Valorem and the impact on increases with ratepayers, as well as to try to balance what the rating agencies' expectations are. The MDC has an Aa1 rating (Moody's) and they are in a position now where it isn't appropriate for them to continue drawing down from the reserves from the standpoint of the eyes of the rating agencies. The \$800,000 surplus that is being forecast for 2014 is going to be put into the 2015 budget at a rate of \$761,000. The proposed budget will put them in a position at the end of 2015 with an unassigned general fund balance relative to the revenues of approximately 26%. The rating agencies require them to keep a higher unrestricted fund balance because if something breaks that is not budgetary then it is going to be big. The metric that Moody's holds them accountable for is between 15% to 30% of the general fund revenues.

Councilor MacDonald said he gets that the minimum funding requirement for the pension is roughly \$5.8 million, which is a good thing and really creative. He asked what is going to be done next year because it seems to him that this is a one-time event. John Zinzarella said it is a one-time event. They are maintaining the same funding level for the general fund in 2015 so there is no increase in the 4.95% general fund relative to the pension. The MDC is in arbitration with CRRA and is seeking damages for the unfunded pension, as well as for the unfunded OPEB. They are buffering themselves between the pension trust, OPEB trust and the general fund. There will be a due to and due from receivable book as opposed to an increase and including it in the Ad Valorem rate passed on to the member Towns. Councilor MacDonald asked if they are still on a defined benefit plan or if there is any movement over to a defined contribution plan. John Zinzarella said they are on a defined benefit plan and they are on a pension moratorium right now with the collective bargaining units. This will be going through 2017.

Councilor Moriarty said there had been a discussion a couple of years ago about the MDC piping water up to UCONN and he asked if the MDC is in active conversations with other Towns or with people who need water out there so that more revenue could be created for the District. John Zinzarella said the District is always looking for opportunities and there are a couple of Towns from time to time that inquire about becoming members. Councilor Moriarty referred to the clean water side and asked how the infrastructure of that system is because some of the pipes in the ground are quite old. John Zinzarella said the engineering group has conducted a comprehensive asset management program, which is in their CIP. This collects a lot of data (i.e. soil conditions and the break history of pipes, etc.). They are trying to prioritize where they see the greatest breaks in what classes and have this addressed through that CIP program. Councilor Moriarty said the high cost of electricity was talked about and he asked if solar energy has been looked into to try to offset some of this cost. Clean energy and clean water go “hand in hand”. John Zinzarella said this is all part of the strategic plan they are looking at. Their current hydro contracts will be expiring in 2016 and 2017. That is Green Energy so it will command a premium and they expect it to go up with regards to whatever they are receiving now so this should afford some more revenue. They also have to balance the needs of aesthetics with regards to solar fields.

Councilor Drapeau said at first blush that 25% on the annual debt service seems high but he thanked John Zinzarella for his explanation he had given on that. Councilor Drapeau asked John Zinzarella what the range was again where Moody’s keep them as an Aa. John Zinzarella said this goes from 15% to 30%. Councilor Drapeau asked where the pressure point is with Moody’s in terms of a downward rating with added debt service. John Zinzarella said the Clean Water Project is the “lion’s share” of the debt and this is a self-funded closed loop system with a special sewer service charge. He then explained to everyone what the two pieces of their water bill are (base water and quarterly charge). The Ad Valorem will be staying the same and its sole purpose is to fund the debt service for the Clean Water Project. Councilor Drapeau said there is a pretty significant debt service and he is sure that the MDC has been exploring the markets to get the debt service down. John Zinzarella said \$140 million worth of revenue bonds were issued in November for the Clean Water Project and the net interest cost on that is 3.63%. This was the first Green bond issued in this State so this brought in a separate investor market. They focus on working with their underwriters to develop a market. They also communicate with Moody’s to maintain the rating, etc. They are controlling the debt service by trying to minimize the interest rates. They have a debt limitation which is 5% of the aggregate Grand List of the eight member Towns but the Clean Water Project is excluded from this because it has its dedicated revenue stream, as well as any GO debt that is related to the water utility is outside of that also.

Town Manager Scaife referred to Slide 3 (Page 3) of the budget presentation. He wanted to go back to the issue that Councilor MacDonald had raised about the surplus and destination from the previous year at \$2.9 million. Town Manager Scaife asked again why no surplus is being projected. John Zinzarella said a surplus hadn’t been accumulated in 2013. That is from prior years, not singular or multiple ones. It is the fund balance. Town Manager Scaife said that had clearly been intended to go into the budget because it was adopted. The surplus would have been nearly \$4 million if they had taken the \$2.9 million plus the surplus of \$828,000 if that would have come forward. John Zinzarella said the unassigned fund balance would be 18.96% if the \$2.9 million dollars was to be utilized in 2014. When the 2014 budget was adopted with a 3.9%

Ad Valorem increase to the member Towns, he told Town Scaife that they had been talking to his predecessor in the budget meetings about how they were actually upwards of a 7% increase request for 2013 and 2014. Each of those had been trimmed down to 3.9%. He had discussed everything with his leadership and said he had told them that he would try to find other ways to avoid using and drawing down on the fund balance to a level below 20% because that could possibly bring a negative outlook from Moody's. That discussion had occurred at the Board of Finance meeting. He is trying to avoid them floating \$250 million to \$300 million in short term debt each year at 10 basis points each year. That would be \$200,000 to \$300,000 each year of an additional interest expense. Town Manager Scaife asked going forward that there be a footnote that explains why there is such a change because this will be a fundamental one once it is adopted.

Town Manager Scaife referred to the \$1.5 million contribution transfer from other funds. The documents that had been presented on November 6, 2014 had quoted this as being at \$20.210 million for the adopted and this was at \$18.9 million on the projected so there is a significant change. John Zinzarella said the Clean Water Project impact in the general fund is being separated out in 2015 because it is such a significant piece. He believes that still had been intertwined in the November 6, 2014 presentation but this had been removed in the final one that had gone to finance. The contribution from other funds had been the predominant piece from the contributions coming in from the special sewer service charge. They previously had been showing the revenue coming in from the Clean Water Project in the general fund and they then showed the debt service that was coming out. Town Manager Scaife said maybe they could get a supplement explaining this so that this can be tied in with the November 6, 2014 data. John Zinzarella said this can be seen on Page A3 in the 2015 Proposed Annual Budget document.

Town Manager Scaife referred to Slide 8 (Page 8) of the budget presentation with regards to payroll related charges. The pension and the planned employee benefits are big numbers in terms of increase, etc. There is a fairly high percentage if these are rolled together across all of them. To some degree, there is more contribution as salaries increase but he was having trouble understanding why this would jump so much in one year. John Zinzarella referred to the 2014 adopted pension line item and that reflects a \$3.1 million contribution for land so that was at \$4.169 million. For 2015, this is being proposed to being \$4.730 million and the total ARC for the pension plan is \$5.8 million. Town Manager Scaife thought the land transaction was a 2014 one. John Zinzarella said that was in 2014 and the adopted 2014 budget assumed the \$3.1 million worth of land that was going to be contributed in 2014. Town Manager Scaife said that backed out. John Zinzarella said that took them down to \$1.1 million and they only had one piece of land so they are back up to where they were.

Town Manager Scaife referred to Slide 18 and Slide 19 (Page 18 and Page 19) of the budget presentation with regards to the employee medical benefits and other employee benefits, which are significant increases. If water and sewer are added together then this is approximately 16.7% combined. He asked why there would be such a swing between what happened on the water side versus the sewer one. John Zinzarella said they maintained the funding level from the general fund at the level of 2014. They are still going to make their ARC but this isn't being put into the 2015 proposed budget to drive the Ad Valorem increase higher. They also believe with the CRRRA arbitration that they are at a point where the arbiters will hopefully come to a decision in

2015 so they can start the negotiation for the payment of it. There is a \$1.8 million swing. The contingency plan is a supplemental contribution from the water side to make sure the pension stays at the funding levels.

Councilor MacDonald said the Ad Valorem for all of the Towns is at about \$1.8 million and he asked if they would be put below 25% if they were to add \$1.8 million use of their prior year's surplus, which would wipe out any tax increase to all of the Towns. They obviously don't want to go below 25% and 8 basis points. John Zinzarella told Councilor MacDonald if they did that that they would be at about 22.9% and that would be lower than they would want to be. Councilor MacDonald said he was just curious and he then mentioned about anything that they can do with regards to the taxes. He then said that he doesn't think anyone is happy with their water bill. He thought as a Town Council that they wanted to have the MDC brought in so that they could get a better understanding which he thinks they have now. He would like to see if they could get these documents put on the Town's website. John Zinzarella said there is an investor relations and finance portion on MDC's website and maybe they can have a link to this on the Town's website.

Mayor Vasel said he had spoken at length the other day to Ray Sweezy and he had gotten his questions answered. Mayor Vasel thanked John Zinzarella, Ray Sweezy and Ron Angelo.

**D. Discussion & Possible Action – New Rocky Hill/CREC Intermediate School  
Serving Students in Grades 4-5**

Mayor Vasel asked Jo-Anne Booth to read the three Resolutions aloud and in full. Jo-Anne Booth read aloud and in full, the Resolution Charging the Government Operations Subcommittee of the Town Council and the Public Buildings Commission with the Oversight of the New Rocky Hill Intermediate School Serving Students in Grades Four and Five, the Resolution Authorizing the Preparation of Schematic Drawings and Outline Specifications for the New Rocky Hill Intermediate School Serving Students in Grades Four and Five and the Resolution Authorizing the Board of Education to Apply for a School Construction Grant for the New Rocky Hill Intermediate School Serving Students in Grades Four and Five.

Deputy Mayor Bell made a motion to accept the following three Resolutions. The motion was seconded by Councilor MacDonald and adopted unanimously.

**“Resolution Charging the Government Operations Subcommittee of the Town Council and the Public Buildings Commission with the Oversight of the New Rocky Hill Intermediate School Serving Students in Grades Four and Five”**

WHEREAS the Board of Education of the Town of Rocky Hill is pursuing a \$31,792,182 Intermediate School serving students in grades four and five in collaboration with the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC), which is planning to construct a new magnet school on the same campus; and,

WHEREAS it is in the best interests of the Town that the Project be constructed effectively, promptly, cost effectively and wit citizen and council participation;



Now therefore; the Council hereby establishes the following procedures and charges the following committees with the construction of the Project as follows:

Section 1. The Public Buildings Commission (the "Commission") shall in conjunction with the Town Manager and Director of Community Development Services to review all plans, specifications, change orders and contracts for the planning, acquisition and construction of the Projects. The Commission shall make recommendations to the Government Operations Subcommittee of the Council (hereafter the "Subcommittee") with respect to the design of the Project, its construction, implementation, entering into contracts, payments and all issues arising in connection with the Project and expenditures therefore.

Section 2. The Subcommittee shall consider and act upon each recommendation of the Commission. The Subcommittee shall consider and act upon all issues arising in connection with the planning, acquisition and construction of the Project, including approval of their design and implementation; construction manager agreements; contracts and payments; change orders; equipment; obtaining state approvals (except those required by law to be obtained by the Board of Education). The Subcommittee may consider and act on any question, problem, issue or dispute whether or not the Commission has failed or refused to consider or make a recommendation with respect thereto. Contracts approved by the Subcommittee may provide for the delegation of decision making authority to construction managers, architects or other job site supervisors as appropriate in order to maintain workflow and efficiency, provided that all decisions made by construction personnel shall be reported to the Commission and Subcommittee promptly.

Section 3. No action or approval of the Subcommittee shall be effective unless a quorum of a majority of its members is present and a majority thereof votes in favor of such action or approval. In the absence of any vote to the contrary by the Subcommittee, the Town Manager shall execute all contracts approved by it. The Subcommittee shall keep full and accurate minutes of its meetings, including the votes of each of its members. The Subcommittee and the Commission shall meet in joint meetings wherever possible, but absence of a quorum of one body shall not effect or prevent the other from meeting and conducting business.

Section 4. The provisions of this resolution shall be subject to the Town Charter, and specifically Sections 815, 816 and 817 regarding public bids, and Section 818 regarding payment approval by the Director of Finance. The Subcommittee shall comply with Section 810 of the Charter regarding Director of Finance certification of funds prior to entering into any contract.

Section 5. In all instances wherein state law requires the establishment of or action by a School Buildings Committee, the Subcommittee and a representative of the Board of Education appointed by the Town Council, hereinafter is designated as the School Buildings Committee. The Subcommittee shall ensure that the Projects Architects, in cooperation with the Town and the Board of Education have pursued the maximum state grant funding for the Projects, and have discussed with the Subcommittee the impact of design alternatives on grant funding.

**“Resolution Authorizing the Preparation of Schematic Drawings and Outline Specifications for the New Rocky Hill Intermediate School Serving Students in Grades Four and Five”**

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Rocky Hill Town Council hereby authorizes the Town Manager to proceed to go out to RFQ (Request for Qualifications) for Architectural Services and Construction Management Services for the preparation of Schematic Drawings and Outline Specification for the New Rocky Hill Intermediate School serving students in grades four and five.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town Manager is authorized to proceed with full design and construction bid documentation (including schematic drawings and outline specifications) pending receipt of the state grant commitment specifications once an Architect and Construction Manager have been approved.

**“Resolution Authorizing the Board of Education to Apply for a School Construction Grant for the New Rocky Hill Intermediate School Serving Students in Grades Four and Five”**

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Rocky Hill Town Council hereby authorizes the Rocky Hill Board of Education through its Superintendent of Schools to apply to the Commissioner of the State Department of Education and to accept or reject a grant for the proposed New Rocky Hill Intermediate School serving students in grades four and five.

Before this motion was voted on, Mayor Vasel said this would be for them to move forward with starting the process because the State needs to have this by December 1, 2014 and it isn't that they are building or buying a school now.

Councilor Moriarty asked if it is correct that this will in no way close a school in Rocky Hill when these schools open up. Superintendent Dr. Zito handed materials out. (Please see the Third Attachment.) Frank Morse introduced himself as being the Chairman of the Board of Education. Superintendent Dr. Zito said a meeting had been held last week. Officials from the State Department of Education, a representative who works on education policy from the Governor's Office, State Senator Doyle, State Representative Guerrero, Mayor Vasel, Deputy Mayor Bell, Councilor MacDonald and Town Manager Scaife had been in attendance at that meeting. Superintendent Dr. Zito said this proposal had been reviewed at that meeting. In partnering with CREC, two schools would be built in Rocky Hill. The Gardner's property on Brook Street is being considered for this right now. They are looking at putting the intermediate school on 14 acres and the CREC school on 17 acres on an adjacent parcel. He went through the materials quickly. This wouldn't close a school in Rocky Hill but it would address some significant space issues and it would allow them to remove the Stevens School and West Hill School portable classrooms. Stevens School and West Hill School could remain as neighborhood schools serving the first four grade levels (K-3).

Councilor Moriarty asked if they will have the capacity at Griswold Middle School to take all of the students if the kids from Hartford want to stay in Rocky Hill's school system after Grade

Five. Superintendent Dr. Zito said yes because it would be 45 additional students and he doesn't see any impact at all.

Councilor Moriarty asked if CREC would own the land. Superintendent Dr. Zito said this is an unresolved issue at this point. The latest on this is that Rocky Hill would be purchasing its land for its school and CREC would be purchasing its land but this is subject to change based on legislation. The land acquisition is also reimbursable through the State funding formula on new construction. Councilor Moriarty asked if these would be two separate buildings because the original plan was for one adjoining building. Superintendent Dr. Zito said the projects were trying to be physically combined in the original conversation but the latest iteration of the project is for them to go with two separate buildings because there are some concerns about the State reimbursement formulas if the projects are combined in terms of how the square footage reimbursements would be allocated. Councilor Moriarty asked if they will still have to go out to bond for the whole amount even if they are going to get the reimbursement. Mayor Vasel said they might or might not have to. Superintendent Dr. Zito said correct. This is a first time proposal in Central Connecticut and it has never been done before in their region. An unresolved question is whether they will have to go out to referendum for the full amount or if they will have to go out for just the portion that Rocky Hill would be responsible for. Councilor Moriarty asked what the projected finished completion date of this is. Superintendent Dr. Zito said it would be the fall of 2017.

Councilor MacDonald thought a lot of them had thought about this being done on the Moser School site but that is clearly not big enough. This is truly a homerun to him and this will be a real benefit for this Town. He thinks State Representative Guerrera and State Senator Doyle will be very helpful and handy in this. Councilor MacDonald's goal is for them to go out to referendum for only a very small piece of this. They would be having additional Open Choice students in so that would more than offset the cost of additional teachers, etc. There would be a school for Rocky Hill and they would get rid of all of the portable classrooms. There are a lot of working items left for this but he applauded Superintendent Dr. Zito, the Board of Education and also Councilor Moriarty when he was working on this. Councilor MacDonald told the Councilors to spend time looking at the materials that Superintendent Dr. Zito had given them because this is unbelievable and he will absolutely support this. Hopefully they can get this through the State and the State will act as quickly as the Town will.

Councilor Kochanek said Gardner's property has periodically been looked at for the development of homes. There have been some issues with chemicals that have been used there over the years and he asked if this has been considered or addressed. Superintendent Dr. Zito said this has been discussed with the person who has oversight for CREC instruction and who has indicated that schools have been built in other communities where some soil pesticide issues have been dealt with. It is just a matter of following the appropriate removal of the hazardous materials.

Councilor Drapeau said that he and Superintendent Dr. Zito had a conversation earlier today. Councilor Drapeau said this is a great idea but the Rocky Hill taxpayers are going to want and need some informational press so that they are given all of the facts. He urged for this to be strongly considered and he thinks this will make it easier to get this through. Superintendent Dr.

Zito said the Board of Education has discussed this a couple of times and this had been brought up at the meeting last week. The public information piece will be critical if this project is to be successful.

Deputy Mayor Bell mentioned how she had attended last week's meeting and she is very encouraged by the potential for the educational community in Rocky Hill, as well as for all of the taxpayers. This is a work in progress and it is a potential win-win situation. There are a lot of questions still needing to be answered but she wholeheartedly endorses moving forward with this.

Councilor Casasanta referred to the informational component of this project. She has gotten a lot of questions because of the activity going on in the past six months with the implementation of all-day kindergarten and the installation of the portable classrooms, etc. The public will be demanding some sort of proposal supplementation with regards to this project going forward and she is encouraging for this to be done in stages if possible. She agrees that it is really important for them to understand that they are trying to have some benefits given back to the taxpayers and they are also trying to maximize the potential of the educational program in the Town. Superintendent Dr. Zito said he had given a fairly comprehensive overview of this in his Board of Education update at their meeting last week. He agrees with Councilor Casasanta and Councilor Drapeau about the continual messaging getting out. Superintendent Dr. Zito said there are significant financial advantages here but this Town needs new school infrastructure in reality and this will address long term infrastructure needs. He agrees with Deputy Mayor Bell about this being a win-win situation if this can be done at a significantly reduced cost. Councilor Casasanta is disappointed that the property at Moser School is too small for this project but she thinks this is still a great benefit to the Town. Superintendent Dr. Zito said Moser School is sitting on approximately 11 acres of land and it served between 80 to 90 students. There will be 700 students at the CREC school and another 430 students at the intermediate school. CREC felt the Moser School site would be too small.

Councilor Szeps said it has been a long road to get to this stage. They are finally talking about the removal of the portables from West Hill School and Stevens School. He remembers the discussions about the conditions of their schools prior to his tenure on the Board of Education. It is exciting to see the light at the end of the tunnel approaching them. He is going to support this action with the hopes that they can seal this deal and move the educational system of Rocky Hill forward.

Councilor Vargas said she will also be supporting this and she asked the Board of Education to keep them in the loop as soon as they hear anything. She has one concern though. The Board of Education had talked about K-3 at budget time and how people didn't want to split the fourth and fifth graders off but she said this will definitely do that. She thinks this should be part of the Board of Education's discussion with the parents. The kids will have to move after third and fifth grade. Superintendent Dr. Zito said when he was first hired a couple of years ago, there had been discussions and one of the first charges from the Board of Education was for him to develop a program for full-day kindergarten. In open session, one of the items that had been discussed was for them to get rid of the neighborhood schools. West Hill School could be converted into a school for Kindergarten through Grade Two and Stevens School could be

converted into a school for Grade Three through Grade Five but the Board of Education chose not to act upon that. Many parents' sentiments were that they like the neighborhood schools because there is the emotional piece about having to send a kid out of the neighborhood. He thinks as students get older that this tends to wane. This project will keep the neighborhood schools intact for the first four years of school for kids and they will all come together for Grade Four. He thinks there will be a lot of excitement about a new intermediate school. One of the things he is excited about is the opportunity for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) to be introduced, as well as the possibility of World Languages being introduced in a fourth and fifth grade academy. Parents have questioned him at PTO meetings about why Rocky Hill isn't offering World Languages and that is because they have been dealing with funding issues. They can be set up educationally now with some success in the future with this opportunity of a fourth and fifth grade school with the State paying a big piece of the cost. He thinks this will energize the parents. Councilor Vargas thinks the educational part of this is very exciting. She wished Superintendent Dr. Zito good luck and asked him to keep them informed. Superintendent Dr. Zito said the Board of Education absolutely will.

Mayor Vasel said he also had attended last week's meeting. They will get reimbursed \$9,000 per student for the ones they accept. Superintendent Dr. Zito said this will depend on the threshold they reach. CREC has distributed a worksheet and he told the Town Council that he could share that with them tomorrow. They are expected to be bringing in about \$90,000 this year in Open Choice funds for the 30 students they have for the regular attendance grant while Avon is looking at bringing in a little over \$1 million in their attendance grant and they will also be getting a \$100,000 bonus for early childhood support. When all of Avon's choice grants are totaled up, they will be bringing in approximately \$1.4 million into their operating budget this year and Rocky Hill will be bringing \$178,000 in, of which about \$73,000 is because of Jahala Grous (IT Director for Board of Education) writing a technology grant that CREC awarded. Rocky Hill will increase the revenue dramatically into the school district if they increase the amount of Hartford students and that will help offset budgetary costs in other areas. Mayor Vasel said he had discussed a couple of things at last week's meeting that people were very receptive to. There are four fields in the proposed plans and he said these would be used under the discretion of the Parks and Recreation Department. The two gymnasiums at these schools would be made available to Rocky Hill residents after school. He would also like to see the school set up as a storm shelter. They are talking about a 95% reimbursement so Rocky Hill's share would be \$1.5 million. There is talk about the frontloading of the 95% possibly so they wouldn't have to go out to a referendum. That money would come forward first. He thinks this is a decent deal for Rocky Hill. He will be working closely with State Representative Guerrera, State Senator Doyle and Superintendent Dr. Zito.

Councilor Moriarty asked Mayor Vasel if the meetings could be held later in the day or on Fridays because he had asked him to sit in on them. Mayor Vasel said there were twenty or twenty-five people at the meeting last week but he will look into this. Superintendent Dr. Zito said it is difficult to coordinate the group because they are trying to coordinate with someone from the Governor's Office, etc.

At this point, the motion was voted on.

E. Discussion & Possible Action – Cancellation of December 1<sup>st</sup> Council Meeting

Mayor Vasel said there are no agenda items for the Town Council's meeting that is scheduled for December 1, 2014 unless there is something they want brought up.

Councilor Vargas made a motion to cancel the Town Council's regular meeting scheduled for December 1, 2014. The motion was seconded by Deputy Mayor Bell and adopted unanimously.

Adjournment

Councilor Szeps made a motion to adjourn the special meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilor Vargas and adopted unanimously.

As there was no further discussion, the special meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jo-Anne Booth